



The HPD News

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Mayor Recognizes Truck Enforcement Unit

Mayor Lee P. Brown recently presented a Mayor's Proclamation to HPD's Truck Enforcement Unit in recognition of its success in making Houston's highways safer for motorists. The unit became operational on October 18, 1999 with a mission statement of "Safe Trucks Driven Safely" and the goal to proactively perform inspections of 18-wheel commercial vehicles and to assist in the investigation of serious traffic accidents involving 18-wheel commercial vehicles.

During the unit's first calendar year of operation, there was a 58 percent decrease in fatality accidents involving 18-wheel trucks. The Truck Enforcement Unit conducted more than 8,200 truck inspections and placed 51



percent of the trucks inspected out-of-service along with their drivers. More than 1,000 safety decal stickers were issued to safe trucks that passed inspection. The decal allows the drivers to avoid additional safety inspections for 90 days while traveling through the United States,

Mexico or Canada.

The Truck Enforcement Unit is also responsible for enforcing the prohibited use by commercial vehicles of the East Freeway's eastbound and westbound left lanes between the Uvalde and Waco exits during a pilot program that ends in May.

Awards & Commendations Serve As Employee Morale Builders

Do you know an HPD employee that deserves to be recognized for outstanding performance in their job or for commendable actions that have taken place outside of the workplace? If so, you can nominate them for an award or commendation from the Chief of Police!

All HPD civilian and classified employees are eligible for nomination or to make a nomination. Civilian employees can be nominated for the Civilian Award of

Merit, Lifesaving Award, Chief of Police Commendation or Unit Citation. Classified employees can be nominated for these awards as well as the Medal of Valor, the Meritorious Service Award and the Blue Heart. Qualifications for each award are listed under HPD General Order #200-20.

Citizens are also eligible for recognition from HPD for their unselfish devotion to the department or the community with a Public Service Award. Acts of

courage or heroism by citizens can also be recognized.

When an employee is recognized for outstanding performance, their actions serve as an example for other employees to follow. Supervisors should note that nominating employees for HPD award or commendation builds morale.

For more information about HPD awards and commendations, contact Debbie Williams, Awards Coordinator, at 713-308-9156.

Chief's Column

As Police Department employees, most of you have driven westbound on Memorial Drive from downtown and noticed the monument made of Texas pink granite that was constructed in 1992 in honor of Houston police officers killed in the line of duty. As you know, each year during Police Week a service is held at the Houston Police Officers' Memorial to remember those who have helped guard and protect the welfare of their communities and lost their lives in the process.

I would like to remind all HPD employees that Police Week will be held May 14 - 18 this year. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 of each year as National Police Officer Memorial Day.

P.A.N.D.A. Program Expands to City Parks

P.A.N.D.A. (Parents and Neighbors Defense Alliance) will soon expand to include City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department facilities. The plan is to add more than 40 new P.A.N.D.A. Safe Houses and P.A.N.D.A. Partners. Currently there are 221 P.A.N.D.A. Safe Houses and 192 P.A.N.D.A. Partners.

P.A.N.D.A. is a child safety

The entire week is set aside to recognize the excellence and professionalism of law enforcement. This year's activities will begin with a service at 10:15 a.m. on Tuesday, May 15 at the Houston Police Officers' Memorial. The service will include the presentation of the annual Memorial Wreath, a 21-gun salute and a fly-over by HPD helicopters. On Wednesday, May 16 at 10 a.m. the Ministers Against Crime have organized a prayer service surrounding the 1200 Travis police headquarters. The week will conclude with an awards ceremony on May 17 at 10:30 a.m. at the High School for Law Enforcement when the department will recognize those who have made significant contributions to policing. At noon on Friday, May 18, Police Week will

program designed to involve the entire community in developing strategic approaches to keeping children safe. There are three components to the P.A.N.D.A. program: P.A.N.D.A. Partners are volunteers who monitor the safety of children at school bus stops or as they walk to and from school; P.A.N.D.A. Safe Houses are businesses, residences or churches that are a safe haven for children;

be recognized at the state level with a memorial service in Austin.

Police Week is a time of reflection for all of us. I hope every officer will take a moment during the week of May 14 - 18 to embrace the significance of the job you do each day and the risks you take to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Houston. If you are a civilian employee, consider the importance of the support functions you provide to assist officers in completing their assignments safely and returning home to their families at the close of the day. I invite you to join me during National Police Week at one or more of the scheduled activities.



Newborns Eligible for Honorary Police Officer Certificates

All HPD employees who are new parents may receive a certificate naming their child an honorary police officer.

Certificates may be requested by forwarding a written request to Debbie Williams,

Awards Coordinator, Administration Coordinator Command.

Please provide the following information when requesting a certificate: Employee's name, job title, division and shift assigned; and baby's full

name and date of birth.

The effective date of this program was October 13, 1997. Children born on or after that date and only immediate family members are eligible.

The Thin Blue Line 'Online'

Among the various responsibilities within the Media Relations Division is the Department's Web site. The Houston Police Department catapulted into the future when we went on line on February 15, 1999.

Our Web site, www.houstopolicedepartment.com, has proven to be very popular, with over 500 visitors daily. Although the intent of our site was to provide the general public with information about their police department, there is still good information for our employees that can assist them in performing their jobs better.

As we continue to upgrade the Web site with new information, we will post the monthly publication, HPD NEWS, online to augment the distribution of hard copies through the Command offices. It is our intent to make the noteworthy articles available to every current and retired HPD employee. Visitors to our Web site can also access information pertaining to Positive Interac-

tion Program (P.I.P.) Crime Bulletin crime statistics, crime prevention tips, recruiting information, the locations of HPD facilities and a breakdown of HPD divisions. In addition, information about missing persons, current news releases about on-going investigations, links to community resources and open records procedures are available through the Web site. Links to Houston City ordinances and Texas State laws, in addition to guidelines for using 911 and contacting the police in non-emergency situations are also offered.

HPD's Web site has received these awards: HPD Chief of Police Commendation; The Gold Tin Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement Sites; The Internet Innovator and Excellence Award from Technology New Jersey, Inc.; The Memphis Police Department's Award of Excellence for Law Enforcement Web Design; The Belleville (Wisconsin) Police Department's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement Web Site Design. HPD's webmaster is Jeff Monk who can be reached at 713-308-1800.

Police Activities League Begins Crafts Program

P.A.L. (Police Activities League) now has a monthly crafts program for kids between the ages of 8 and 18. Some of their recent projects include learning floral design and designing centerpieces for The Exchange Club's annual Heroes Banquet in January, decorating wooden valentines in February and mastering the Oriental art of origami in March.

P.A.L. began in 1983 with the support of The Exchange Clubs of Houston. The goal of P.A.L. is to enrich the lives of children by building positive relationships with Houston police officers through educational, social, athletic and cultural activities.

For more information about P.A.L. contact Karen Collman at 713-247-4338.

The 100 Club Honors HPD Officers

The 100 Club will hold its annual awards banquet on Wednesday, April 11, 2001, to honor officers from Houston area law enforcement agencies. The 100 Club is recognizing these HPD officers:



Officer David Freytag (North Command) – Lifetime Achievement Award – A 37-year veteran of HPD, Officer Freytag is a founding member of HPD's Honor Guard, a co-creator of the Houston Police Officers and Texas Peace Officers Memorial Services, and was instrumental in the creation of the Houston Police Officers Memorial monument.

Officer Jo Beth Austin (Southwest Div.) – Officer of the Year - Officer Austin is being recognized for her expertise in crime analysis. She assisted in solving the robbery/kidnapping/murder of a medical student last year as well as a series of pawnshop robberies.



Officer Lisa Leeson (Southeast Div.) – Officer of the Year – As a bike patrol member, Officer Leeson made over 74 felony arrests last year and was instrumental in getting a 'crack house' demolished near one of the city's parks.

Sgt. Robert V. Ruiz, Jr. (Eastside Div.) – Officer of the Year – Last June, Sgt. Ruiz saved the life of a bicyclist who was struck by a car on the Gulf Freeway service road. The victim's arm was severed and Sgt. Ruiz applied first aid until paramedics arrived.



Officer Charles A. Vazquez (Northeast Div.) – Officer of the Year – Last July, while on bike patrol in Kingwood, Officer Vazquez arrested a suspect who was charged in a series of rapes in the area.

Officer Michael L. Williamson (Training) – Officer of the Year – While off-duty and traveling to Austin, Officer Williamson saw a traffic accident where a motor home caught on fire after hitting a car. Officer Williamson risked his own life to save a ten-year-old girl who was trapped inside the burning vehicle.



Congratulations to these officers for their outstanding work and heroism!